A Brief

EXHORTATION

TO

Thoſe who are Shut up from our Society, and deprived at preſent of Publique Inſtruction.

Which may be uſeful to others alſo who have any feeling of Gods Judgements.

By *Symon Patrick* Rector of St. *Paul Covent Garden.*

LONDON,
Printed for *Fr. Tyton*, at the ſign of the three Daggers in *Fleetſtreet.* 1671.

A Bid

EXHORTATION

TO

Those who are Shut up from our Society, and deprived at present of Publique instruction.

Which may be useful to others also who have any feeling of Gods Judgements.

By Symon Patrick Rector of St. Paul Covent Garden.

LONDON,
Printed for Fr. Tyton, at the sign of the three Daggers in Fleetstreet. 1691.

An Advertiſement.

IT is thought fit to annex to this Treatiſe two little Papers, Printed in the time of the late Plague: The latter of them being a Conſolatory Diſcourſe that hath great affinity with the argument of this Book; and the former, becauſe of its relation to the other, being not handſomely ſeparable from it. Toward the Concluſion alſo of the later there is ſomething added for the fuller explication of the 91. Pſalm: *which could be but briefly touched, when it was crowded among ſo many other things into one ſheet of Paper.*

Beloved,

Beloved,

IT is so natural to every one when he is in distress, to think of those sins which he presently concludes have brought him into it, that I am willing to presume there is none of you, but hath reflected on himself before this time, and askt his soul, *What have I done?* Affliction is the season for consideration. It is the mother of many wise thoughts, and much knowledge, especially of mens selves; to whom they are too great strangers till that day comes. In a time then of such great Calamity as this, when the Hand of God presses you so sore; to suppose you to be without all serious reflections on your waies, would be to imagine you as hard as the Stones. We cannot believe you are so insensible. Now that Death presents it self so near,

and

and looks you in the very face, it is not possible but that you begin to consider how you have lived, and what preparation you have made for another state: Now sure you ask your selves these questions with some passion, *What have we done?* and *What shall we do to be saved?* Nay my Charity carries me so far as to think, that in such straits as these to which you are reduced, you have done a great deal more; and proceeded to make many resolutions of amendment. You have vowed to God (I perswade my self) that if he will spare your lives, you will forsake those sins which have made you so miserable; and live hereafter in a stricter observance of his holy commands. You are willing to receive your lives from his hands on these conditions. You ask them on no other terms, but that they may be better imployed for him. And desire him (I presume) to deal with you, as you seriously mean to become new men.

These things therefore passing for granted; I will not fill up this little Paper with earnest Exhortations to repentance, for which the Rod of God calls

calls so loudly; but rather direct you to make it such a repentance as shall never be repented of. And awaken your selves I beseech you to consider what I say. Sit down and pause a while as you go along, to urge every thing upon your heart. And what is said here in brief, make long discourses of to your selves; labouring at this present to supply the Preachers place.

I. And *first*, Since you are now looking into your selves, I beseech you search to the very bottom of your hearts. Though it be a great way thither, yet God hath now given you time and leisure enough to descend into it. As near as you can therefore unravel all your life, that you may see what the whole course of it hath been. Reflect, I mean, not only on some sins that are nearer at hand, but look on those that are further off, and lie more out of your view. Lay your selves naked and examine your selves all over, both without and within, that you may find out every thing which is offensive to God. Else I must tell you, this affliction will only make hypocrites, in stead of producing good Christians. The fruit of it will be only

a partial

a partial reformation, which in effect is none at all. Shall I assist you a little in this great affair?

Know then that the sins which you are in search of, are commonly (for more ease understanding sake) comprehended under these three heads. 1. Such as are directly against God. 2. Such as are an injury also to your neighbour. And 3. Such as are against your selves. Some of which likewise consist in doing what you ought not to have done; and others in not doing those things which you ought to have done.

And therefore in your enquiry after the offences against the Majesty of God, you must consider such things as these. Have you not been wont to blaspheme the Name of God and his Son? Is it not your custom to swear and curse, to deride Religion? and to make a scoff of Holy things? Or at least have you not been very negligent in your thoughts of God? Have you used your self to call to mind, who made you? Have you spent any time in pondering his great love in sending his Son to you? Have you not resisted many motions of the Holy Ghost? Have you not omitted to worship God as you ought, by daily

prayer

prayer, and giving him thanks? Have you constantly attended his publique service? Have you not staid at home, when you ought to have been in the House of God? Behold then (before you go any further) your sin in your punishment. You may not go thither if you would, whither when you might have gone you would not. O consider, how many happy opportunities have you let pass unregarded? How many blessings have you received and never minded from whence they came? How long have you lived and yet been as without God in the world? Carrying no fear of a supream Power in your mind, no love to the Father of your being; no grateful sense of the benefits which he doth you every moment. For these things you ought to be ashamed and confounded. It ought to make you blush to lift up your eyes to heaven, when you reflect on these neglects. For there is nothing so unnatural as this, to forget him that made you, that sustains you, that provides you with a world of good things continually, both for soul and body.

And now when you turn your thoughts

thoughts from hence (as soon as sorrow and grief will let you) to look upon the offences which may be committed against your neighbour; you will find them to be so many, that it will cost you some time to do no more than know them. For as many persons as you are acquainted withall, or stand in relation unto, so many sins may arise by your injuries or neglects of them. Some of these persons (for example sake) are your *Equals*. Consider therefore; have you been always just in word and deed to them? Have you defrauded no man? Have you never slandered nor backbited your neighbours? Have you not been a make-bate among them and disturbed their peace? Was it not your wont to pass the time in jeering of them, or passing rash censures and judgements upon them? Is there no malice nor hatred in your hearts to any of them? Have you pardoned them when they wronged you? Do you not bear an old grudge to some or other? Are you not forgetful of benefits, and revengeful of injuries? Have you succoured, as you were able, those that were in need? Have you not been without compassion to the poor,

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and unmindful of those that were sick? All these things must be examined: and many more will present themselves to your thoughts, if you do seriously imploy them to find out those faults that are to be amended.

And again you will see (if you look about you) that there are other persons who stand *Above* you, requiring other regards than your *Equals* do. And here it is much to be considered, whether you have dutifully carried your selves to your natural Parents. Whether you have honoured the King, with your spiritual Governours and Pastors, as you ought. And whether your Masters and all your betters have had their due respect. Have you not been irreverent in your behaviour or speeches to some of these? Have you not disobeyed their just commands and contemned their orders? Have you not causlesly quarrelled with their injunctions, and found fault with their government? Nay hath it not been your manner to revile them and speak evil of them? Are you not ready to believe all the evil that is spoken by others, and to sit in judgement upon your Governours? Do you not slight and undervalue their Authority?

Have

Have you not mean thoughts of them, never considering that they are set by God over you? I doubt these are sins that have spread themselves far more than the Plague. And therefore narrowly examine your selves about them, that none of them may escape your notice.

And then cast your eyes on other persons that are *Below* you, who may charge you it is possible with many sins more. Consider, what care have you taken of your children, your servants, and all others who are committed to your charge, that they may want nothing that is needful either for their souls or bodies? Have you made a Conscience to instruct them in their duty, or to send them to be instructed? I cannot instance in all particulars, unless I should write a Book; and therefore I desire those who are Parents only to enquire about this one thing which is of great moment. Have you put your children in mind often of the vow they made in Baptism? Do you remember them of their promise to forsake the Devil and all his works, and to keep Gods holy Will and Commandments? Do you tell them that God hath taken them to be his

children,

children, and that they may not therefore do as they list, but as he would have them? Do you teach them the Catechiſm which is appointed for their inſtruction; and take care they come to him that hath the cure of ſouls among you when it is required, there reverently to receive his admonitions? I fear theſe things are too much neglected, if not deſpiſed, or elſe we ſhould ſee Chriſtian people in better condition. If any of you therefore intend now to make one good Chriſtian, let him call himſelf to an account in this particular.

You ſee (my Brethren) already, that it is a very ſerious buſineſs to amend, ſeeing there are ſo many things to be ſet in order. And yet you have not heard all that you have to do if you deſign a reformation. For you are to conſider how you have reſpected your ſelves, to whom there is a great reverence due, and whom many things do very much misbecome. As for example, is it fit for a rational creature to mind nothing elſe but getting of wealth which he muſt ſo ſhortly leave? Hath he nothing elſe to care for but what he ſhall eat, and what he ſhall drink, and

wherewithall he shall be cloathed? Is it seemly for him to wallow in drink, to burn with lust and filthy desires? How doth he look when he is full of wrath and transported by his choller? Is he not quite transformed? Doth he not seem to be beside himself? Examine your selves then in these things; in matters of temperance, of chastity, of meekness, of patience, of heavenly mindedness, and such like. And think you are not your selves, till you be reclaimed from the sottish vice of drinking and tipling; from beastly uncleanness; from fury and rage, which are no less brutish; nay from earthly mindedness and the love of money, which is a very gross stupidity.

But I see it will not consist with the brevity I design to say any more on this head, but the rest must be left to your own conscience. Only let me briefly note *Two* benefits which you will receive by an impartial sober weighing of what hath been said. *First*, You will see that it is a work of time and pains to amend so many things as you may find amiss; and therefore will require not only your present, but your future indeavours.

deavours. Especially if you consider, that in all the cases I have mentioned, there are these things likewise to be examined and pondered. The frequency of those sins; the delight you took in them; the expence of time and money they put you too, the degree of boldness and shamelessness; the scandal they brought along with them; the dishonour they did to Religion, to holy daies, and holy things; the many reproofs and checks they were against; with all the vows and resolutions which you broke that you might committ them. If these things, I say, be weighed, you will not easily believe your selves, if you should fancy that the business is already done, which I suppose was but begun together with this affliction that is upon you. And now I mention your affliction, it gives a fit occasion for the *Second* note which I would have you make; *viz.* That your punishment is a great deal less than you deserve. That you have not received so many stripes, as you have committed offences. Here being such a vast number of sins which you may find your selves guilty of, it will make you cry out (if you be touched with any pious sense) *It is of the Lords*

mercies that we are not consumed. Why doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? There is no reason that we should repine under his afflicting hand, but rather bless his goodness that we are not in a far more lamentable condition.

II. And that you may not be more miserable, nor after severer strokes here fall into everlasting condemnation, I beseech you as you love your souls, stir them up, by the grace of God, to a through and speedy reformation in every particular wherein you must charge your selves to have done amiss. You see your work; do not go about it with a dull and an heavy heart; but with earnestness, with zeal and fervour of spirit, as those who are infinitely concerned in it. The danger you are in sure will awaken you. The judgements of God which hang over your heads will chase away all sloth and laziness. And especially the sad sense of your former neglects will make you give all diligence that this business may not miscarry in your hands. Which that it may not,

III. I beſeech you in the next place that your purpoſes of reformation (which I hope you are now forming) may proceed upon a right ground, and flow from a ſound and laſting principle of obedience; *viz.* Not meerly from the fear and dread of Gods preſent judgements, but from a true fear of himſelf, and a reverend regard to his ſovereign authority. Not meerly that you may now eſcape out of his hands and ſave your lives; but that you may be really his friends and live to him. If your reſolutions take their beginning from the heavy ſtroke which is upon you, yet they muſt take their growth and confirmation from the conſideration of the cauſe of it, which is nothing elſe but your ſins againſt God. Theſe you muſt hate more than the Plague it ſelf. You muſt purpoſe to amend out of an abhorrence you have to all diſobedience againſt his Majeſty, out of a love you bear to his bleſſed nature and holy will; out of a ſenſe that he is our Lord and Governour; that all his Laws are juſt and good; that he is your chief good and laſt end, in agreement with whom only you can be happy. For if it be nothing elſe but the preſent calamities which awake you

when they are gone you will fall asleep and be secure in your sins again. But the fear and the Love of God will alwaies inspire you to do well, and they will never let you return to folly any more. These will also make you entire in your obedience. They are an universal cause of all vertue. They will not suffer you to be partial in your duty, but throughly instruct you to every good work. And here I beseech you again to have a respect to all Gods Commandments, for it can never be too often remembred. Place not your amendment only in increasing your devotion, but in bettering your manners. *This is the damning hypocrisie of this Age, that it slights all good Morality, and spends its zeal only in matters of Worship and Devotion.*

IV. And now I have but one request more to make to you, which you will eatily grant, if the foregoing be entertained. It is this: If God be pleased to restore you to your liberty again (which we continually pray for) be sure to make good the Vows which now are upon you. Let it be seen that indeed the love of God and Religion is

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in your hearts, and that your purpoſes are not the fruit of a preſent paſſion. Cannot you remember that you have made many promiſes to God before now, which were never performed? Hath not a ſickneſs, or a Sermon begot ſome reſolutions which all vaniſhed away? O ſearch I beſeech you (if you love your eternal life) after the cauſe of this falſneſs; for it will betray your purpoſes again. Was it not becauſe you did not throughly hate the ſin which you promiſed to leave? Was it not becauſe a right ſenſe of God and goodneſs had not ſetled it ſelf in your minds? Did not your diſaffection to ſin ariſe only becauſe the temptation was gone? Was not your appetite then ſurfeited and ſick, which in time recovered it ſelf? Then juſt ſo it will be hereafter when you go abroad again. You will renew your friendſhip with your evil courſes, unleſs you have ſome good principles in you ſtronger than all your ſinful appetites, and than all the ſollicitations of the world.

If you mean therefore to be as good as your word, you ſee it is of abſolute neceſſity to ſettle ſome firm unalterable principle of new obedience in your ſoul.

The former advice must be diligently heeded, unless you intend to lose all your labour: and so must these also that follow.

1. The better to assure your future obedience, I wish you to make some experiment upon your selves, while you remain within doors. There are some things that can be done at this very time: Let us see you perform them, if you would have us believe that you mean to amend. Cannot you now be patient, and not think hardly of God or men? Cannot you bless God for this affliction, and pray that it may do you good? Cannot you spend your time very much in meditation, in prayer, and in examining your selves? Cannot you seriously desire the prayers of good people for you? Cannot you reform that vain and evil communication which we hear many of you entertain at your Windows with idle and loose people, that are not at all affected with the judgements of God upon the Land? If you will not do these, never believe any of the promises you make of amendment in all the rest.

2. And then I intreat you to resolve by the grace of God to continue these

holy exercises of prayer, meditation and examining your selves when you come abroad again: in order to make you perform the other parts of your duty. They are not all Religion (as men foolishly think) but they are the helps and means to bring us to the practice of all that God commands. Therefore be sure you spend some part of every day in calling to mind your purposes, and the grounds or reasons on which they were made. Put your selves in mind of God, of your dependance on him, and of the love and duty you owe him. Earnestly beseech him for Jesus his sake to assist you with the grace of his holy spirit that you may keep your word. And take an account of your performance as often as you can. And let me take the liberty to tell you, it is easie here to read your sin in your present chastisement. You have not loved to be retired, and so God shuts you up whether you will or no. Shut up your self therefore hereafter in secret: get aside from all company; and be alone with your selves and God if you mean to be saved. You have complained its like in times past, that you had no time to spare from your necessary occasions.

casions. Behold! now God hath taken away this objection from this busie City. Now they have leisure enough who would find none before. Now he hath left them nothing else to do but to consider their waies. Their Trades stood lately in their way to Heaven: they could not pass thither through their Shops. And so now he hath shut up their shop doors and removed their trade from them. He hath made room now for Religion, which could find no place a little while ago. He would let that into their houses and hearts which was barr'd out by innumerable imployments. He seems to bid them now be wise Merchants for better things, and to follow a traffique with Heaven, which they would have no commerce withall before. This if our people will not see they must die (I think) of incurable blindness. And let all those whose eyes are opened, have a care to amend this great, this first fault, which makes so many others.

3. To which let this request be also added, that you would all remember to confirm your resolutions by frequent and reverend receiving of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. A duty too much

much neglected, though it be instituted on purpose for a remembrance of Christs love in giving his life for us; than which there is nothing more powerful to move our hearts to all love and obedience. This every little business in the world can put by. For this men can find no time; and so their resolutions are starved and die for want of so good nourishment as this holy feast would afford them. If then you would have them maintained in life, do not deny your souls the benefit of this divine food, but take all opportunities to refresh and strengthen them therewith.

4. It would be of great use also if you would often seriously reflect upon the indulgence of God in sparing your lives, when so many thousands were every week cut off. Cast your eyes back upon this mournful time, and think why was not my grave digged amongthe rest. You cannot imagine the mercy of God hath so mean an end as to continue you here only to eat and drink, to get wealth and injoy the rest of the pleasures of the flesh. The world is in no such need of you, that you should stay only to take up a room in it. It would still be full enough if you were

gone.

gone. Your living when others are dead is of no consequence, unless it be to prepare for a better life. Use it therefore for that end, and think that you are delivered to glorifie your Creator by new obedience.

5. I should have desired you withall often to think of death; and not to look upon it as a great way off, because you have escaped this stroke: It may lie in ambush for you in another place, and therefore you are to expect that every where, which waits for you no body knows where.

6. And lastly, I should have commended to your most serious meditation the promises of the life to come; beseeching you not to lose so great a good for want of persevering a few daies longer in that good mind, wherein you now find your selves by the grace of God.

But then I should leave no room for a few words to all truly pious Souls, who may lie under this calamity as well as others. To you at last, O dear Friends, this short Discourse addresses it self. And though I know you will not think your selves unconcerned in all that hath been said, but

but find ſomething either to be amended or compleated in you; yet the promiſes of eternal life (juſt now mentioned) ſeem above all other things to offer themſelves as moſt proper for your thoughts at this ſeaſon. The hope of this will be your greateſt comfort in this affliction. This will ſupport you and make you to rejoyce in the midſt of tribulation. What though you have the common portion of others in this preſent time, ſince you have a great deal better prepared for you hereafter? Nay what though you be now excluded from external communion with the people of God? the time is coming when you ſhall enter into a moſt happy fellowſhip, from which there will be no ſeparation. Do not therefore faint under this affliction, nor be weary when you are corrected. Humbly ſubmit your ſelf to your heavenly Father. Reſign your ſelf into the hands of his wiſe Love, that he may diſpoſe of you as he pleaſes. Believe firmly that he is good even when he ſmites. And think that he who will give you eternal life, would not deny you a leſs thing if he ſaw it beſt. Remember the patience of *Job*; or rather ſet be-

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fore your eyes the example of our blessed Saviour, who was *made perfect by sufferings*. Think that he pities you; and that withall he looks upon you to see how you will now behave your self. Let him behold a Soul meek, contented, couragious, rejoycing alwaies; for there is not a more lovely spectacle that he can be presented withall. And let him see your belief of his Gospel so strong and lively, that you do not tremble to pass through that gate, which he hath entred before you. Follow him chearfully to the grave it self. Remember that he hath overcome Death, that King of terrors: That he hath despoiled it of all its power, and made it innocent to his followers. Let it not affright you therefore; but look upon it as a necessary passage to a better life. Welcome it as a friend, and do not take it any longer for an enemy. Receive it with such a countenance, as if you believed it to be a messenger sent to fetch you home to your Fathers house. In these good thoughts I leave you; and heartily commit you to the love and care of our dearest Lord. Beseeching you, now that our publique In-

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ſtructions cannot reach you, this private Meſſage may be imbraced with as much affection as it is ſent to you. And beſeeching him alſo that you may be as ſtrongly moved to a ſpeedy conſideration of theſe things, as I was to the writing of them, for the uſe of thoſe Souls that are committed to my Charge. *Amen.*

Auguſt 19. 1665.

FINIS